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Diana T Fritz 12/06/2006 04:35:41 PM From DB/Inbox: Diana T Fritz

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Text:

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 04412

SIPDIS  
CXABU:

ACTION: ECON  
INFO: POL DEA P/M AMB DCM

DISSEMINATION: ECON  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: ECON: OJOHN  
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CLEARED: DEA: RHUDON, POL/ECON: KMORRIS

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 004412

SIPDIS

JUSTICE FOR OIA, AMFLS, AND NDDS  
DEA FOR OILS AND OFFICE OF DIVERSION CONTROL  
STATE FOR INL, NEA/ARP, NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [AE](#)  
SUBJECT: 2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,  
United Arab Emirates: Drug and Chemical Control

Ref: State 157136

¶1. (U) Summary: Although not a narcotics-producing country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is believed to be a transshipment point for traffickers moving illegal drugs from the major drug producing countries, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. Frequent reports of seizures of illegal drugs in the UAE over the past few years underscore this conclusion. Most seizures have been of hashish. There are several other factors that render the UAE a way station, including its proximity to major drug cultivation regions in Southwest Asia and a long (700 kilometer) coastline. High volumes of shipping render UAE ports vulnerable to exploitation by narcotics traffickers. In February 2005, the UAE signed an MOU with Iran on cooperation against the trafficking of narcotics and psychotropic drugs and their precursor chemicals. In September 2005, the U.S. DEA also established a country office in the UAE to enhance cooperation with UAE law enforcement authorities. The UAE is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

¶2. (U) Status of Country: A major regional financial center and hub for commercial shipping and trade, the UAE is a transshipment point for illegal narcotics from the drug-cultivating regions of southwest Asia, to Europe, to Africa, and less significantly, to the United States. Western Europe is the principal market for these drugs, and Africa is becoming an increasingly prominent secondary market. Factors that contribute to the role of the UAE as a transshipment point are the emergence of Dubai and Sharjah as regional centers in the transportation of passengers and cargo, a porous land border with Oman, and the fact that a number of ports in the UAE are de facto "free ports"-where transshipped cargo is not usually subjected to the same inspection as other goods that enter the country.

¶3. (U) Country Actions Against Drugs in 2005  
Policy Initiatives: The UAE continued to advance its national drug strategy based on intensifying security at the country's air and sea

ports and patrols along the coastline, reducing demand for illegal drugs through educational campaigns, enforcing harsh penalties for trafficking, and rehabilitating drug addicts. The UAE's Federal Supreme Court ruled in 2003 that authorities needed proof that drug use occurred in the UAE before they could prosecute users. A positive blood test is considered evidence of consumption, but not evidence of where the consumption took place. In September of 2005, the UN established a sub-office on Drugs and Crimes in the UAE. The UAE government funded the estimated \$3 million cost of the office and contributed an additional \$50,000 to the UN counternarcotics program. The sub-office is responsible for coordinating national counternarcotics strategies and integrating them into the UN's comprehensive global program.

¶4. (U) Law Enforcement Efforts. In 2005, UAE counter narcotics forces reported 862 drug cases and arresting a total of 529 people. This marked a decrease from 2004, when officials arrested 1,419 people in 901 cases. The largest number of arrestees were Emirati nationals (217) followed by Iranians and Pakistanis. In 2005, UAE officials seized 6 kilograms of opium, 185 kilograms of heroin, and 242 kilograms of hashish. In the first four months of 2006, UAE officials seized 94 kilograms of hashish, 46 kilograms of heroin, 9 kilograms of opium and 85, 040 narcotic tablets; Punishment for drug offences in the UAE is severe. A 1995 law stipulates capital punishment as the penalty for drug trafficking. No executions for drug trafficking, however, have ever taken place, and sentences usually are commuted to life imprisonment. UAE authorities continue to take seriously their responsibility to interdict drug smuggling and distribution. In May 2005, Dubai police announced that they had seized 200 kilograms of hashish from two "Asians" who were attempting to sell it. This has been the largest seizure of hashish in Dubai to date. UAE authorities continue to cooperate with other countries to stop trafficking. This cooperation has resulted in several arrests. In one case, Dubai police, cooperating with Jordanian authorities, blocked an attempt to smuggle 2.7 million doses of "Captagon," which was being smuggled in 2 buses traveling from Eastern Europe to Dubai. In November 2006, the Dubai Criminal Court sentenced two Pakistanis and one African to life imprisonment for smuggling heroin into the UAE with the intent of trafficking. One of the Pakistani drug smugglers was caught at the Dubai International Airport with 40 capsules of heroin each weighing 9 grams, which he had swallowed.

¶5. (U) Corruption: The government of the UAE as a matter of policy does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances or the laundering of proceeds from drug transactions. Senior officials are not known to engage in or facilitate illicit production of these drugs or the laundering of proceeds from drug transactions. There is no evidence that corruption-including narcotics related corruption-of public officials is a systemic problem.

¶6. (U) Agreements and Treaties: The UAE is party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol and the 1988 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The UAE has signed, but has not yet ratified, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The UAE recently ratified the UN Convention against Corruption.

¶7. (U) Cultivation/Production: There is no evidence of any major drug cultivation and/or production in the UAE. Published records show that there were two cases of "planting" drugs in the Emirate of Ras Al-Khaima in 2004, with a total of three people arrested.

¶8. (U) Drug Flow/Transit. High volumes of shipping render the UAE vulnerable to exploitation by narcotics traffickers. The UAE-Dubai, in particular-is a major regional transportation and shipping hub. Narcotics smuggling from South and Southwest Asia continues to Europe and Africa and to a significantly lesser degree to the United States via the UAE. Hashish, heroin, and opium shipments originate in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran and are smuggled in cargo containers, via small vessels and powerboats, and/or sent overland via Oman. According to published figures, Iranians and Pakistanis made up the largest number of non-UAE nationals arrested in drug cases in 2005. Recognizing the need for increased monitoring at its commercial ports, airports, and borders, the UAE is making an effort to tighten inspections of cargo containers as well as passengers transiting the UAE. In December 2004, the Emirate of Dubai signed

the Container Security Initiative (CSI) with the U.S. CSI inspectors arrived in Dubai in 2005 and are now inspecting containers destined for the U.S. Customs officials randomly search containers and follow-up leads on suspicious cargo.

¶9. (U) Domestic Programs (Demand Reduction). A 2003 report noted that the majority of UAE drug users take their first doses abroad, primarily because of peer pressure. Statistics reveal that 75 percent of drug users in the UAE prefer hashish, 13 percent use heroin, while six percent use morphine. The report illustrates a clear relationship between drug abuse and level of education-75 percent of arrested drug users in 2002 were high school graduates, but only two percent were university graduates. While the data is a few years old, trends reported are still reflective of current societal patterns. The focus of the UAE's domestic program is to reduce demand through public awareness campaigns directed at young people. The UAE has also established rehabilitation centers.

¶10. (U) In June 2005, the UAE issued a postage stamp to highlight the hazards of drugs as part of its awareness campaign. It also held a high-profile "Drug Awareness Week" with exhibits prominently set up in all of the local shopping malls. UAE officials believe that adherence to Muslim religious morals and severe prison sentences imposed on individuals convicted of drug offenses effectively deter narcotics abuse. An affluent country, the UAE has established an extensive treatment and rehabilitation program for its citizens. There is a rehab center in Abu Dhabi, two in Dubai, and one each in Ajman and Sharjah for those identified as addicts. In accordance with federal law, UAE nationals who are addicted can present themselves to the police or a rehabilitation center and be exempted from criminal prosecution. Those nationals who do not turn themselves in to local authorities are referred to the legal system for prosecution.

¶11. (U) Third-country nationals or "guest workers" who make up approximately 80 percent of the population generally receive prison sentences upon conviction of narcotics offenses and are deported upon completing their sentences. Most UAE nationals arrested on drug charges are placed in one of the UAE's drug treatment programs. They undergo a two-year drug rehabilitation program, which includes family counseling/therapy.

¶12. (U) U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs and Bilateral Cooperation: The DEA Administrator visited the UAE in July 2005 to enhance counter-narcotics cooperation with the UAE. During her visit, she proposed, and the UAE accepted, establishing a DEA presence in the UAE to work closely with UAE authorities. The first DEA office was established in September 2005 in Dubai.

¶13. (U) The Road Ahead: The USG will continue to encourage the UAE to focus enforcement efforts on dismantling major trafficking organizations and prosecuting their leaders and to enact export control and border security legislation.

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